

Dangerous Mistakes a Christian Makes, Part 2 - Acts 25:11-12 - April 11th, 2010

- This is part two of a series, which we began the week before resurrection Sunday, titled; "Dangerous Mistakes a Christian Makes."
- We're learning valuable life lessons from the beloved Apostle Paul who's been falsely accused and unjustly imprisoned for two years.
- What is so notable and remarkable is how he's able to stay on message and avoid dangerous mistakes that could've easily been made.
- This study is different in that Paul, by the Holy Spirit, rises from scripture teaching us what to say or do, and also, what not to say or do.
- We see this with the first one we looked at, where Paul avoids making a dangerous mistake that could have ultimately cost him his life.

1. We try to win favor in the eyes of the world (Verse 9)

- Festus, who was motivated by wanting to win favor with the Jews, asks Paul if he's willing to go back to Jerusalem and stand trial.
- By all accounts, this could have appealed to Paul, given that his heart has always been to win his Jewish brethren to Jesus Christ.
- Paul could've easily made the mistake of agreeing to go back to Jerusalem thinking that it would give him another chance to win them.
- Here's what I'm thinking; we too can fall prey to the notion that if we find favor in the eyes of the world, we'll be able to win the world.

2. We become easily intimidated by the world (Verse 10)

- Paul responds to Festus by telling him that he stands before Caesar's court and that's where he should ultimately be tried.
- He goes on to boldly state that he has not done any wrong to the Jews in Jerusalem, and he knows that Festus knows this very well.
- Suffice it to say, Paul is demonstrating that he's not the least bit intimidated by this politician, nor the court before which he now stands.
- Paul was neither manipulated nor intimidated by Festus or Caesar's court, because he stood before the Highest of courts to be judged.

3. We are unwilling to lose our lives in this world (Verse 11a)

11a If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die.

- v11a Paul says something astonishing to Festus when he tells him that if he's guilty of anything deserving death, he won't refuse to die.
- I would venture to say, that this Governor had never heard anything like this before, nor would he ever hear anything like this again.
- The Apostle could both say this and mean this because he had long ago "settled the matter" of "dying to self" and his life in this world.

Matthew 10:39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. NIV

Matthew 16:25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. NIV

Mark 8:34-38 34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. 36 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? 37 Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels." NIV

John 12:25 The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. NIV

- I would be grossly remiss were I not to quote that famous saying by Jim Elliot who lost his life as a missionary to the Auca's in Ecuador:
- Pictured here is his actual writing when he wrote; "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

4. We refuse to take risks to win the world (Verses 11b-12)

11b But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!"

12 After Festus had conferred with his council, he declared: "You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!"

- v11b Paul then says that if the Jews are bringing false charges against him, no one has the legal right to hand him over to the Jews.
- v12 After making his appeal to Caesar, Festus has a conference with his council then declares that Paul will go to Caesar in Rome.

- This is interesting because Paul is appealing to one Caesar Nero who would eventually become the most evil Roman emperor.
- Later in his reign, he would have his mother murdered, and then blame Christians for the fiery destruction of much of Rome.
- This is the Caesar that had Christians covered in pitch, light them on fire, as human candles mocking them as the "light of the world."
- Suffice it to say, while this persecution of Christians had yet to take place, Paul is taking quite a risk in even appealing to this Caesar.

F.F. Bruce in his commentary writes; "There was one way open to Paul as a Roman citizen to escape from this precarious situation, even if it was a way attended by special risks of its own. ...To us who know Nero's record in relation to Roman Christianity, it may seem strange that Paul should have appealed with such confidence to him. But, whatever Nero's personal character might be, ...there was little in A.D. 59 that gave warning of the events of A.D. 64."

Ivor Powell in his commentary wrote; "The Apostle never ran from danger; he never shirked his responsibilities; he feared God, not man. Nevertheless, it would have been suicidal to commit his future into the hands of his enraged antagonists. ... He appealed for a hearing before Caesar, and that request changed the course of history. Had he failed to reach Rome, several of his epistles would not have been written; the spread of the gospel through Europe might have been greatly delayed and the dreams of his life unrealized. His jaw was probably set, and his eyes reflected determination when he made his request to Festus. If he had made mistakes earlier, he was determined his errors would not be repeated on this momentous occasion."

- Dare I say; it's the risk taking Apostle Paul's of this world who are the ones that not only change the world, but win the world to Christ.

Os Guinness in his book "The Call" had this to say; "...Lawrence [of Arabia's] most stirring statement on vision is in his introduction to 'Seven Pillars of Wisdom'. 'All men dream: but not equally, those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act their dreams with open eyes, to make it possible. This I did.' ...What makes 'dreamers of the day' different from daydreamers, and it is also why they're dangerous, is they act their dreams with open eyes. ...Malcolm Muggeridge wrote his own epitaph to a friend: 'Here lieth one whose soul sometimes burned with great longings. To whom sometimes the curtain of the Infinite was opened just a little, but who lacked the guts to make any use of it.' ... [Quoting] Morris West's 'The shoes of the Fisherman'; [he writes] 'Find me men with fire in their hearts and wings on their feet.' ... [Quoting Oswald Chambers to his wife]; 'Every man is made to reach out beyond his grasp, Hourly almost my sense of His call grows, ...there are grand days coming for you and me. ...Oh what a grand strenuous life there lies out in front of us, the un-bribed soul for His enterprises; that is my charge.'"